

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY



April 6, 2005

The Honorable Stephen J. Snow
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
Route 50 Task Force
1 Harrison Street, SE
P.O. Box 7000
Leesburg, VA 20177

Dear Supervisor Snow:

Thank you for providing the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Recommendations of the Route 50 Task Force.

We commend Loudoun County for embarking on this very important process and for reaching out to the numerous stakeholders in the area (including the Authority) who have a vested interest in the planning of this most valuable section of the County.

Overall, the Authority endorses the recommendations of the Task Force, but would like to offer the following thoughts:

Segment 1 – C. Economic Development and Tourism. As this segment is a major portion of one of the three sides of the “Dulles Loop” that many groups have been advocating, the Authority encourages the Committee’s report to reflect the importance of this transportation corridor as well as to advocate that economic development in this area should relate to the airport and aviation uses.

Segment 1 – D. Transportation and Infrastructure. The Authority is a major stakeholder in this dialogue, and has been a key partner with public and private sector in the past in the reviewing of alternatives and in arriving at the current plan. We have a high interest in the recommendations for this segment and look forward to participating in future discussions and planning for it.

Segment 2 – B. Recommendations, Zoning. In reference to the statement *“Additionally, such zoning increases the volume of heavy vehicles on Route 50, which is at cross purposes with the use of Route 50 by commuting traffic,”* while the Authority understands that this comment is associated with zoning recommendations in Segment 2, we are concerned that a broader implication could be construed that Route 50 should be limited to a commuter/POV route. This clearly would be at “cross purposes” with getting commercial traffic to Dulles Airport from the west-southwest. The Authority would object to any notion of Route 50 being protected or promoted as a truck-free parkway.

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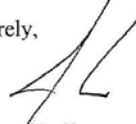
Segment 3 – B. Arcola Village and Surrounding Area. The Authority is concerned with the recommendation to modify the land use designation for the land south of the relocated North Collector Road in the Arcola area, adjacent to the 65 LDN contour. The recommendation would replace the Corridor Retail designation with a category that would include all of the uses provided for under Corridor Retail and would also "... permit up to 100% high density multi-family residential uses" adjacent to the 65 LDN Contour.

We understand this is permissible under Section 4-1400 of the County's zoning guidelines with the requirements that the structures are designed to ensure the maximum interior level does not exceed 45 LDN; that the Airports Authority is provided with an avigation easement over all residential areas; and that the presence of aircraft overflight and resulting noise be fully disclosed to the prospective buyer and included in the sales contract and deed. We question, however, the wisdom of potentially allowing all of the available land adjacent to the 65 LDN contour to be developed as high density multi-family residential. The 65 LDN is recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration as being incompatible with residential uses. The noise contours represent the noise exposure for the annual average day; not any particular day within the year. As often as not, the actual noise exposure level may be higher or lower than the level indicated by a LDN contour.

The transition from "other than residential" land uses to "residential" should be gradual with a greater mix of residential as you move away from the noisier locations; not as dramatic as the suggested 100 percent high density multi-family. While a resident in a mixed use environment understands there are compromises that come with that type of neighborhood design, the addition of aircraft overflight may "tip the balance" of what is considered tolerable. As an example, with the air traffic increases at Dulles we have had an increase in noise complaints, as have elected officials (county, state, and federal). Many of these complaints came from the development of Westwind Crossing which is located northwest of the airfield in Loudoun County. While this community is located beyond the 60 LDN contour (yet inside the one mile buffer where disclosure is required) the expectations of the Westwind community were of a more passive environment. We are concerned that 100 percent residential density in this section of Arcola could create even a greater level of dissatisfaction than that experienced by the residents of Westwind Crossing.

Thank you again for providing the Authority the opportunity to participate in the process and provide comment on the Task Force recommendations.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Gaffney
Vice President for Communications

cc: Members of the Route 50 Task Force